

To Love a Player

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Mollie

I was rushing across the quad, praying that I would make it to my last class of the day. I lost track of time after lunch while studying in the library. When I looked at my watch, I realized that I had five minutes to run across campus just to make it on time. It was one of those times where I wished I had a scooter or one of those Segway things. I was nearly there, there was only the open courtyard separating me and the door to the hall where my class was held.

All of a sudden, I felt something hard crash into me and I catapulted towards the hard ground below. Closing my eyes, I braced myself for the hard landing and was surprised when I felt myself hovering just inches above it. Looking down, I noticed two arms holding my waist and I tried to ignore the tingling sensation their grasp was sending through my body. Instead, I focused on my anger of nearly getting knocked down.

"Hey," I shouted, looking angrily into the bluest eyes I had ever seen and seethed, "watch where you're going!"

A smirk appeared on the face that was mere inches from mine and the guy holding me said, "Wow, how about 'you're welcome, Callen, for saving me from eating dirt.' That would be so much better than yelling at me. You're the one who wasn't looking where they were going."

"So you ran into me on purpose?" I asked, glaring at him as I bent down to pick up the contents of my bag that had spilled on the ground.

"Something like that," he smirked as he squat down and handed me my notebook that landed at his feet. I shot him another glare and he shrugged, nodding to something behind me "Plus I saved you from tripping over that bench right there."

I followed his nod and saw the bench that would have gotten in my way. I was still mad, but I didn't want to seem rude, so I muttered, "Thanks." He raised his eyebrows and shrugged like it was no big deal. I narrowed my eyes at him for a moment, trying to figure out where I had seen him before. He raised an eyebrow, shooting me a questioning look before I shook my head. If I hurried

to my class, I would be able to sneak in the back door without being noticed. The test hadn't started yet since class would have just started.

Opening the door, I saw that my professor's back was turned and knew that this was my opportunity. I quickly dashed in, almost making it to the nearest chair when the door slammed shut behind me, stopping me in my tracks. Turning, I see the guy that nearly knocked me over outside saunter in, his blue eyes honed in on me and he was wearing a huge smirk as he passed me, taking the chair that I was rushing to get to. Ugh, seriously? What is it with him?

"Miss Black, so nice of you to join us." Professor Elliott's voice boomed in the small auditorium. I could feel my cheek going pink with embarrassment as everyone's head turned in my direction. My new enemy was still smirking at me and I resisted the urge to slap it off his face. Somehow I thought that he would enjoy that a little too much. Wait, how is this guy in my class? I've never seen him before. Not that I would have really noticed because I usually sat in the front.

"I'm sorry, professor, I was in the library getting ready for our test today." I said with a sheepish smile. I heard the guy cough, "Kiss Ass" and a few girls near him let out sickening sweet giggles as if it was the funniest thing they ever heard. I shot him a fuming look, which he returned with another smirk. He was such an ass.

Professor Elliott just waved his hand for me to take my seat. I found one in the middle of the row in front of me and cringed because it meant that I had to crawl over people to get to it. I mumbled apologies as I made my way to the chair and sat down. My professor started passing out the tests to each row and I tried to squelch the anxious feeling in the pit of my stomach. I had studied and studied for this test and knew that I would get a good grade, but I still was anxious hoping that the information that I just soaked in at the library would stay fresh in my mind. I knew that my professor loved to put a twist to his test and the information that you spent all your time studying would be omitted, so I always made sure that I was doubly prepared.

I felt something hit me in the back of the head, so I turned to see Callen wink at me. I rolled my eyes at him before shooting him another glare. He just smirked at me; he seemed to be enjoying my annoyance. Shaking my head, I turned to the test in front of me, praying that I had studied hard enough. It was the last big test before our final in two weeks, almost like a prelude to what we would be expecting. I closed my eyes to clear my mind and got to work.

I stared blankly at the test in front of me, wishing I had studied last night instead of hooking up with the hot blonde who offered to tutor me. What was her name? Britney? Chutney? Chelsea? Shrugging my shoulder slightly, I knew that it didn't matter. I looked up and saw her send me a sexy smile, so I winked and gave her one of my trademark sexy smiles. I loved college, it was so much better than high school. You could hook up with as many girls that you wanted to and didn't have to worry about being caught by your parents, or theirs.

My eyes focused on the brunette in front of me. I was curious as to why she didn't react like the girls I usually "accidentally" bumped into. The currents from our brief embrace were still ringing through my body. I hadn't ever felt that with a girl before. I loved how fiery her gray-blue eyes got when she glared at me; they reminded me of a storm brewing in the distance.

I smiled at the back of her head as I watched her writing furiously on her paper. I watched with fascination as I saw her gather up her long hair and twisted it up, putting her spare pencil in it to secure it. The skin of her neck looked soft and instantly, I wanted to kiss along the nape and tangle my hands in her hair. I saw her tuck the wayward strands that had fallen out behind her ears and I shook my head of the thoughts that started popping in my head, trying to focus on the test in front of me.

My eyes ignored my brain and kept looking up at her neck. I knew that I couldn't focus as long as her neck was tempting me, so I checked to make sure Professor Elliott wasn't looking and leaned forward, removing the pencil and watching her hair cascade back down to her shoulders. I groaned internally at how exotic the sight of that made me feel. It was a fleeting moment because she whipped around and gave me an icy glare. I gave a quick nod of my head and smirked as I whispered, "Thanks for the pencil."

She narrowed her eyes at me and ripped it out of my hand. My eyes focused on her full lips as she mouthed, "Leave me alone!" before turning around, tossing her hair angrily over her shoulder. I raised my eyebrows in amusement, shaking my head and went back to the test. I finished with ease and instead of leaving, I stared down at her still working away. A peered over her shoulder and saw that she was going back through her answers. She's a perfectionist, I thought as I watched her correct herself.

I began to wonder why it was that I had never seen her in this class before. It wasn't that I was honestly looking; I usually was flirting endlessly with the girls that sat next to me. She must have sat towards the front of the room which was at least ten steps down from where I was. She stood up from her seat and I shot her a sexy grin, which she rolled her eyes at and kept on walking. I watched her walk down the stairs, hand her test in, and walk out the door. I slung my bag over my shoulder and practically ran down the steps, tossing my test to our professor and dashed out the door.

When I reached outside, I spotted her walking across the courtyard, so I jogged to catch up with her. I reached out for her arm, pulling her to an abrupt stop. Her eyes darkened with a glare and bore holes into mine when she saw that it was me. She yanked her earbuds out of her ears and yelled, "Seriously, what is wrong with you?"

"I was going to apologize and offer to buy you a latte," I said, pulling her close to me. This move was one of my favorite moves to use on girls because they always melted in my arms. This girl, however, put her hands up onto my chest and shoved me back, causing me to stumble slightly because I wasn't expecting it. I looked at her shocked, not believing that she had just shoved me away. Her eyes were a raging storm now as she said angrily, "Leave me alone. Go find some bimbo to hit on or something, isn't that what you do?"

My mouth opened slightly. I felt hurt by her words, even though it was true. My reputation as a player was widely known at our small college, which oddly enough still made most of the girls still want to be with me. Except for this one, a voice said in my mind. My heart thumped back, she could change your player ways. I watched as she rolled her eyes and turned away from me, leaving me in my internal thoughts. I was about to go after her when I heard my phone ring. I looked at it, seeing that it was my sister.

"Hey Lace, what's up?" I asked, watching my mystery girl walking further away from me. I saw a guy pause in front of her and I waited, with a smirk on my face, for her to react the way she did with me. Instead, she embraced him as he lifted her up and swung her around in a circle, kissing her lips. Jealousy ignited in my body and I heard my sister ask, "Cal, are you still there?"

"Uh yeah, sorry. What did you need?" I asked, my eyes still on my girl and this boy who was now walking with his arm around her waist. I heard my sister sigh as she repeated what she had said earlier, "I need you to come spend some time with your nieces and nephew this afternoon. I have my last interview with a potential summer nanny."

"Still haven't found one yet, huh?" I asked, feeling sorry for her. My sister was returning to her job as a fashion designer full-time after working part-time for the last two years. There were complications with her last pregnancy, my nephew, so she didn't feel comfortable with travelling as much as she used to and did a lot of her work from home. She was having trouble finding a nanny perfect enough, they were either too old fashioned or they were only after the job because of who she was. Those were the ones who didn't really care about the kids and those were the ones that I hated the most.

"Ugh, no," she groaned. "I'm one interview away from calling an agency and crossing my fingers that they send me Mary Poppins. I just hope this last girl is what I need or else I will have to rely on you this summer."

"You know that I would love to do that rather than work for your husband and our father at the firm." I said, wishing that she would say yes. My father had gotten the idea that it was time for me to grow up and leave what he deemed as my immature ways behind me. He had an unpaid summer internship at his engineering firm for me. I would be working on a big project, alongside my brother-in-law, who I wasn't a big fan of. The only perk was that I got to live at their guest house on their huge property and honestly, I didn't really need the money since I was loaded. I was looking for a lot of weekend parties and lounging by the pool. Okay, yeah that does sound immature, but really it was going to be summertime, who wanted to be stuck in the office all day long?

"Daddy would kill me if I let you do that, besides, I can't exactly trust you to keep an eye on them while you're seducing your weekly fling," she said, half joking. I pretended to sound annoyed as I said, "Hey now! Wait, who needs a favor this afternoon?"

"Oh little brother, you know that all I want for you to stop with your slutting around and settle down with a girl who sparks your heart," she sighed and added, "Speaking of which, I hear Sophie's back in town from Paris."

"Ugh, no thanks," I grumbled. "Trust me, there are no sparks there."

Lacey laughed as she said, "Yeah I know, there's a whole fire. Anyway, so can you come spend time with your adorable nieces and nephew? The interview is a three-thirty."

I smiled as I replied, "Alright, I'll see ya in a half hour."

I was lost in angry thoughts when I noticed someone pausing in front of me. Looking up, I almost expected to see Callen standing there, but knew there was no way he would have been able to run and casually stop in front of me. I changed my scowl to a wide smile when I saw that it was my boyfriend, Ben. He gave me a curious look as he picked me up, twirling me around and gave me a long kiss.

"Why the scowl, babe?" he asked as we continued walking towards my dorm so I could change for my interview. I shook my head as I leaned into his grasp around my waist and said, "It doesn't matter. How did your project go?"

Ben sighed deeply, giving a shrug as he said, "I think it went okay. Hopefully the company will like it and I'll be selected for the internship."

Ben was in school for graphic design and was selected with four other people to compete for an internship at Premier Designs, a prestigious graphics design company. His teacher all but told him that he was a shoo-in, but it really depended on what the image manager for the company thought. If he got it, then he would be about an hour away from me in Boston.

"When do you find out?" I asked as we went through the doors of my dorm. He rubbed the back of his neck as he said, "They should be making a decision today."

When we stepped into the elevator, I gripped his shirt pulling him to me. I stood on my tiptoe as I kissed him gently and said, "I might be biased but they would be crazy not to give it to you."

He wrapped his arms around me and bent his head low into my neck, nipping at my sweet spot and said, "Thanks for the encouragement babe."

We started making out and were interrupted by the elevator doors opening at my floor. When the doors opened, I heard someone clearing their throat. Turning my head with an apologetic smile, I saw Ben's ex Melanie glaring at us. Ben dropped his hands from my side and gave her a sheepish look. I was still amazed at her power over him, even though they broke up over eight months ago. Sometimes I wondered if there was still something there, but Ben would reassure me that since it was a small school, he didn't want to rub her nose in our relationship.

I opened the door to my dorm room to find my roommate dancing around to the radio. She grabbed my hand and I matched her rhythm before twirling away from her. She moved to Ben and I laughed as they pretended to dance seductively together. It was actually pretty comical.

Ben moved away from her and collapsed on my bed, pulling me down with him. He brushed his fingers through my hair and kissed me deeply. I could feel my tension from earlier melting away. He had a tendency to do that with his kisses. It was one of things that I loved most about him.

He groaned as he pulled away, both of us breathless and he whispered with his lips brushing against my ear, "I have to get to class. Good luck with the interview."

I sighed, getting off of him and walked him to the door. He kissed my forehead, his lips lingering for a long time. They moved against my skin as he said, "I love you."

I smiled, wrapping my arms around his neck as I kissed him lightly and said, "I love you too. Let me know if you hear about the internship."

"I will, bye." He kissed my cheek and I heard Marnie shout out "Love you Benny boy!"

"Love you too Marnie!" Ben laughed as he gave me another quick kiss before walking away and exiting through the stairwell. I turned into my room and went to my closet. I thumbed through my clothes and felt Marnie's arms wrap around my waist, her head resting on my shoulder. Some people thought we were weird like that, but in the last three years, Marnie had become close to me like a sister. We were female soul mates, as she called it.

"What are you doing?" she asked and I groaned, "Trying to find something to wear for my interview." I gave her a helpless look and she sighed, rolling her eyes as she moved me out of the way and pointed to the bed. I went over and sat while she dug through my closet.

"Okay, try this," she said, tossing me an outfit. I tried it on and she scrunched up her nose, shaking her head and handed me a different pair of bottoms. I sighed as I changed again and she tapped a slender finger on her cheek. Shaking her head, she turned back to my closet and said, "Ah HA!"

She handed me my black v-neck shirt that looked like it was made out of satin and a pair of dark wash skinny jeans, pairing it with my gray pumps. She beamed as I twirled around and said, "Perfect, now your hair."

A half hour later, I was ready to go. Marnie gave me a warm hug and said, "Good luck! Call me and let me know how it goes!" I nodded, blowing her a kiss as I walked out the door.

2

Mollie

I had followed the directions perfectly and found myself in front of large iron gates. There was a security guard in the little building and I rolled down my window as he approached. I gave him my best smile, hoping my voice wouldn't come out as nervous as I said, "Good afternoon, I have an appointment with Mrs. Kingham."

"Your name?" he asked and I handed him my driver's license as I replied, "Mollie Black. I'm being interviewed for the nanny position."

His face was blank as he looked down at his clipboard, stating flatly, "Good for you." I stared at his rudeness and wondered if Mrs. Kingham knew about how he treated her guests. I looked at his badge and saw that he was just a rent a cop, so he probably was wishing that he was out fighting real crimes rather than checking people in a gate.

"Alright, Miss Black, you're good to go," he said, handing back my ID. He gestured towards the house and said, "Just follow the driveway to the house."

"Thanks," I said, smiling at him. He rolled his eyes as he turned away causing me to only shake my head and stick my tongue out at his retreating back. The gates opened and I drove slowly along the long driveway. The enormous house appeared just over a little hill. It wasn't at all like I pictured it to be.

It looked like a normal two story house, except that it was twice the size. The driveway split into two, one way led to a garage that looked like it would hold four cars and the other looked like it went behind the house. There was a wraparound porch that extended across the front with wide steps in the middle. The house was a pale yellow with white accents on the shutters and the porch was white. I pulled up in front of the closest garage door to the house and got out. I noticed a sleek looking black Jeep Wrangled Unlimited parked over in front of the second garage.

I took a deep calming breath to stop my nerves. I was aware of whom I was babysitting for, but really wanted this job. I could use the money to pay for the extra art photography class that I was taking this summer. It wasn't apart of my major, but I loved taking pictures and really wanted to do it creatively. I didn't want my parents knowing about it, so I was paying for it out of pocket.

Getting this job would help me pay the tuition and the supplies, plus give me a place to live.

I walked up the front steps, admiring the front porch. I smiled at the porch swing that was swinging lightly in the cool spring breeze. I imagined reading to the kids on that swing, smiling at the thought. I loved kids. I often babysat a lot in my neighborhood and for one summer, I was a nanny for my neighbors. I was proud of the fact that I was the most requested babysitter in my small town. I smiled proudly at that fact and held tight to my folder that held my references incase she needed to see them.

I pushed the button for the doorbell and heard footsteps running to the door, along with the cutest little giggle. The door swung open and I was surprised to see Callen standing there holding a wiggling, two year old boy. I pushed back the glare that threatened to resurface as I plastered a fake warm smile on my face. He looked just as stunned and I could tell that he was struggling to speak to me. I smirked, laughing in my head that I had managed to get the suave Callen Grey speechless.

I saw a dark haired woman appear behind him and she greeted me with a wide smile. She shot him an amused look as he continued to stare at me in surprise. Shaking her head at him, she held out her hand as she said, "You must be Mollie, I'm Lacey."

"It's nice to meet you," I smiled. Internally, I was in awe of this woman for her work in the fashion world, but I really wanted this job and I knew that here she was Lacey Kingham, the mom, not Lacey Kingham, the fashion mogul. I still admired her outfit. She was wearing a sleeveless yellow top with a black flowing skirt and what threw me was her simple black flip flops.

"Please, come in," Lacey smiled, shoving Callen back slightly and shrugged a shoulder in his direction. "Ignore my brother's lack of manners. Cal, shut the door."

The little boy, then smiled widely at me and leaned out for me to hold him. I gave him a warm smile as I took him from Callen's grasp. I tickled his belly as I asked, "And who might you be?"

"Jace," he giggled and I noticed Lacey's eyes sparkle in my direction, giving me a warm look. She held out her hands to take him, but he wrapped his arms around my neck, burying himself in my hair. Her eyebrows went up in

amusement and curiosity as she said, "I think you found a new friend, didn't you buddy?"

He nodded, giving me a shy smile and started playing with my hair. She led me to a small living room, gesturing me to sit in one of the two armchairs while she settled herself in the other one across from me. Jace readjusted himself on my lap, facing me and gave me a big grin. His voice was small as he asked, "Who you?"

"Mollie," I said and he repeated, his L's were changed into W's, "Mowwy?"

I nodded and he ran his hand through my hair as he squealed, "Pwetty Mowwy!" I laughed and he kissed me on the cheek. Lacey was watching us closely and I could see the grin on her face. I noticed how much he looked like her, dark brown hair and crisp blue eyes. I wondered what the other two children looked like.

"Okay buddy, let's go find your sisters and play." Callen said, his eyes were warm as they looked into mine. Jace didn't budge and when Callen tried to lift him off my lap, he clung to me tight. Callen sat on the arm of the chair and leaned in close. I inhaled the scent of his musky cologne as he leaned over me and whispered, "Maybe we can get an ice cream cone?"

Jace's face lit up as his eyes widened. He looked from me to Callen and back to me again, saying, "Mowwy too?"

My heart melted as I looked into his little eyes, beaming brightly back at me. Callen raised his eyebrows at me and I tried not to glare back. I was still not forgiving him for intentionally running into me earlier, no matter how good he smelled or how the closeness his body was affecting me. His eyes were drawing me into him, so I smiled slightly and looked back at Jace, asking, "How about you save me one?"

He nodded rapidly and held his arms out for Callen to pick him up. He waved at me and blew me a kiss as Callen carried him out of the room. Lacey gave me a look that was a mixture of amusement and surprise. "Wow, he's not usually like that."

My cheeks flushed pink and I said, "Oh, well I guess that I have that affect on kids." Lacey nodded, her smile widened and we got down to business. She told me that after my encounter with Jace that I pretty much had the job. She

was pretty impressed with how I was with him and how he interacted with me, but still she wanted to give me a proper interview, as she called it.

"How do you know Callen?" she asked and I tried my best to not roll my eyes. I shrugged and tried to keep my voice even as I replied, "I don't really. I discovered today that he was in my marketing class after we ran into each other outside."

"Ran into each other?" Lacey asked, curiously and I cringed, "Well it was more of him practically knocking me down to the ground."

Lacey rolled her eyes and muttered, "My brother can be an idiot sometimes. I'd apologize for him, but I'm afraid that it really wouldn't do any good. He'll just be an idiot again later."

I laughed at that. I really liked her, she was not at all like I expected. She was warm, funny, witty, and so incredibly nice, someone that I could be friends with. She touched my knee and asked, "How about we go meet my girls?"

I nodded, standing up and followed her out of the room.

It was killing me, wondering what they were talking about. I heard Lacey mention my name and then the both of them laughing. My niece, Elly was watching me intently with amusement in her eyes. I heard them walking down the hall and gave her a look that told her not to say how much I had been pacing. Mollie's eyes narrowed slightly when she saw me, but it quickly went away when Lacey introduced us.

"Callen, this is Mollie. I believe you two know each other?" Lacey said, her voice hinting at a question. I gave Mollie a warm smile as I said, "Not officially."

I held out my hand and Mollie hesitated for a split second before she shook it. The spark between us as we shook hands made the handshake linger a little too long. When she pulled away, her gray blue eyes had an unreadable expression in them as she looked into mine. I could still the tingle from her slight touch in the palm of my hand. My heart fluttered as I ran a finger over the spot and I resisted the urge to grab her hand again. That would be weird, right?

Lacey eyed me suspiciously as she turned towards my nieces and said, "This is Mara, she's five and this is Ellyson, she's twelve."

"It's Elly, mom and I'm practically thirteen." Elly's voice snapped and Lacey let out a short sigh as she said, "I'm sorry."

She turned to Mollie and said, "Her birthday is next week." Mollie nodded, giving Elly a small smile while Elly just rolled her eyes and stomped away. I knew that Elly was not happy with having a nanny watching over her every move. I told her that it was either her or me and I would be a whole lot more strict.

Lacey took in a deep breath, shaking her head at Elly's retreating back. She gave an apologetic look to Mollie as she said, "She's not happy about having a nanny. She thinks she's too old and while I understand her not wanting one, she isn't old enough to fully take care of herself along with her brother and sister."

"Well, if I'm chosen then I would make her my helper instead of my charge. That way I can still watch over her, but yet she won't feel like I am and she could help me out with the younger ones." Mollie smiled and Lacey's eyes

twinkled. I could tell that Mollie had already gotten the job. Lacey beamed at her saying, "She'd love that and you already have the job. It's official now, I love you."

Mollie's eyes widened in surprise as Lacey hugged her. I smiled as I saw how happy she was and our eyes met over Lacey's shoulder. I gave her a thumbs up and her cheeks flashed pink as she looked away from me. Lacey let go and said, "Let's take a tour of the house, shall we?"

Mollie nodded as they walked away. I watched them disappear around the corner and sank into a chair next to Mara, who smiled, "I like her, she's pretty."

"She is pretty," I smiled back at her, nodding my head in agreement. I looked up when Elly came back into the kitchen, sinking into a chair next to me. I gave her a stern look as I said, "You need to let up on your mom."

Elly rolled her eyes at me and I reached over, touching her arm as I said, "I know you think that you're too old, but you can't take care of yourself plus Mara and Jace, but you can help Mollie do it. Would you like that?"

Elly's face relaxed as she nodded silently. I could tell that she liked that idea and I mussed up her hair as she giggled trying to get away from me. I smiled at her and said, "You're a good kid."

"You like her, don't you?" Elly asked, studying my expression. I gave a casual shrug as I said, "I don't really know her enough to like her."

"So? I saw the way you were looking at her. It was like this," Elly said, making a googly eyes and I shook my head, laughing. She gave me a knowing look as she said, "You like her, I know it and one day, you'll know it too."

I just laughed, shaking my head. My eyes caught Lacey and Mollie outside in the back of the house, heading towards the pool. I gave a curious look to the girls and Jace and asked, "Who wants to go outside to play?"

"Me," they all sang in unison, so we cleaned up the kitchen and headed outdoors.

Mollie

My head was swimming as we walked around the big house. Lacey was explaining the rooms and which rooms were off limits for the kids. The house was amazingly beautiful on the inside, but yet it didn't scream "We're loaded! Look at me!", it was very subtle and welcoming, just like Lacey.

She showed me the basement that they have designated as the "Kid Zone" and where Elly and her friends loved to hang out. There was a separated area with a snack bar and I could tell that it had been recently renovated to be more teen friendly. There was a dart board, fooseball table, air hockey, and a pool table next to the snack bar. Comfy plush couches lined the wall and also came out across as a barrier to the more non-teen area. I noticed a stage and Lacey said, "Elly used to put on plays on that stage, but now she uses it for karaoke when her friends are over."

"The snack bar has just about every kind of snack available, both healthy and not healthy. If you're running low on something, just make a note and we'll get it refilled." Lacey explained and continued, "The fridge is stocked with pop, water, and juice. The younger kids either get juice or water, no pop for them, no matter how much they beg."

I nodded and she went on, "As you can tell, this is Elly's area and she is responsible for keeping it clean. Over here is Jace and Mara's area and they are also responsible for keeping it clean. We do have a housekeeper, but I want my kids to have responsibilities, so she's not allowed down here."

I smiled and she pointed over to an area with two rows of plush chairs saying, "That's the kid-friendly movie area, of course the movies are G or PG rated and Elly has to ask permission to get the PG-13 ones from the other movie room that is behind that door."

"How do you feel about my brother?" asked Lacey, with a hint of amusement in her eyes. I perked up my eyebrow in questioning and asked, "Excuse me?"

"How do you feel about my brother?" she asked again and I laughed, humorlessly as I asked, "Why? Are you trying to hook us up or something?"

She shook her head, but I could see a mischievous glint in her light blue eyes. She raised her eyebrows, giving me an expectant look and I shrugged, "I don't know him well enough to feel anything towards him, however, if I had to

honestly spill my feelings for him based on today, then I would say that he's a cocky ass."

Lacey burst out laughing, nodding in agreement. I gave her a curious look as she settled down and said, "I'm beginning to like you more and more. Girls fall all over him, I've never met one who hasn't, but I'm glad because you're going to be living with him."

My mouth dropped in shock as my brain tried to comprehend what she just said. Live with him? Uh, there was no way that I wanted to do that. I stammered, "Um, why would I be doing that?"

"We have a guest house out back and I don't really need you to live with us 24/7, so rather than commute in all the time, you are going to live in it." Lacey said, smiling widely. I narrowed my eyes in confusion, I wasn't getting where Callen fit into living with me. She smiled as she explained, "Cal is interning at our father's engineering firm and since it's closer for him to live here than it would be to live at my parent's summer house, he's going to be living in it too."

The worried look on my face made her say, "Don't worry, it's two bedrooms, each with their own bathroom, and you're on opposite ends of the house. All you pretty much have to do is share everything else. It's even furnished and we can put any stuff that you'll have from your dorm room in storage."

Relief fell across my face as the thought of having to share a bedroom with him went away. Still though, explaining this all to Ben was going to be an issue. Lacey smiled at me once more as she asked, "You really don't like my brother?"

I shook my head as I replied, "I have an amazing boyfriend that I love very much, so I'm good."

Lacey laughed again and motioned for me to follow her outside to the back yard. She pointed out the fenced in pool and how to get into the gate, explaining that Elly could be in the pool by herself, but she had to ask me first and she couldn't be in there alone with her siblings. We crossed the yard to the big guest house where I would be living for the next three months. I noticed we were being followed by Callen and Lacey smirked, "Meet your new roommate."

His eyes went wide, stopping in his tracks, as he frowned. It appeared that he was less than thrilled with the idea too. I smirked at him, loving that he hated the idea of having someone to crush his bachelor fantasies. He narrowed his eyes at me, then protested to Lacey, "Why?"

"She needs a place to stay and I don't need her as a live-in nanny, so she's bunking with you." Lacey smirked at him, obviously enjoying his displeasure. He stomped his foot, making me laugh because he looked like a two year old. He shot a glare at me, which made me smirk in return.

This was going to be a fun summer!

3

Callen

I couldn't believe my sister! Making me share a house with that girl. Normally, I would love sharing a house with a girl, but this one was infuriating because she not once batted her eyes in my direction. I almost felt like I was losing my touch. I listened as Lacey said that she would email her the details of the job and heard her say goodbye, shutting the door behind her. I could almost feel the happiness in my sister's footsteps as she practically bounced down the hallway.

"I don't want to live with her." I grumbled when my sister appeared in the doorway to her TV room. She plopped down onto the couch next to me with a sigh as Jace left my lap to go over to hers. Lacey gave me a knowing look as she said, "You've met your match with that one, you know?"

I scrunched my eyebrows in confusion as I asked, "Huh?"

Lacey laughed as she said, "I have never met a girl resistant to your charms until Mollie and she is so not on Team Callen. It's almost funny, oh wait, actually is very funny."

"Are you enjoying yourself?" I asked, trying to bite back my own smile. I had met my match, but I was determined. I was going to prove that I could get Mollie to fall for me and then at the end of the summer, break it off, just to teach her a lesson. Cruel intentions, I know, but it really bothered me how she didn't act like the other girls did when I was around. The sad thing is that a part of me thought that it was refreshing to be able to be next to someone who wasn't all wrapped up in me or trying to maul me with their lips.

Lacey reached over, patting my leg and said, "It's okay to not be the object of someone's affection, you know."

I placed my hand on hers and sighed, not sure what to say. Lacey leaned her head on my shoulder as Jace snoozed in her lap. I leaned my head against hers and heard her ask, "Are you staying for dinner?"

"Wish I could sis, but I have a party to go to, so I have to go get ready." I said, kissing the side of her head before getting up off of the couch. She tried to stand, but I waved a hand at her and leaned down to kiss Jace on the top of his

head. I gave Mara a hug and a kiss, then slapped a high five with Elly, who informed me earlier that she was too big for hugs.

I let myself out, hopping into my Jeep Wrangler Unlimited and drove back to campus. On my way, I noticed a car smoking on the side of the road and saw Mollie standing in front of it, staring under the open hood. Ignoring the small voice that shouted at me to keep going, I pulled over and saw her look at the sky in frustration. I smirked as I got out, knowing that she was wishing that it was anyone but me.

"Problem?" I asked, stopping in front of her steaming engine and with sarcasm dripping from her voice, she asked, "What do you think, Captain Obvious?"

I shrugged, turning to go back to my car, and said, "I didn't have to stop, you know. I could leave you here."

She sighed an exasperated sigh as she grabbed my arm, sending little jolts of electricity through my body with her fingers. She shook her head and said, "No, please don't. You are the only person that stopped. I can't seem to reach my roommate and my boyfriend's sending all my calls to voicemail."

She let go of my arm and I turned back to her car, waving the steam out of my face. I leaned into to look under the hood, bracing myself on the front of the car. I looked over at her and asked, "So what happened?"

She let out a deep breath and said, "I don't know. The check engine light came on and then all of a sudden, it started smoking."

"I think it's just overheated. You'll need to add water to the tank to get it to run until you can get it checked out, however it's useless to do it now while it's still hot." I remarked and she groaned, "How long will it take to cool down?"

"Well, in order to open the lid safely, it will need at least an hour." I said, stepping back from her car. She sighed, kicking the ground in frustration and put her hands on her hips as I heard her mutter, "That's just perfect."

I grabbed her hand, my breath catching my throat as I felt the connection spark between us. Her eyes looked down at our hands, before meeting mine with the same unreadable expression as before. I cleared my throat and asked, "Are you hungry?"

She gave me a confused look and asked, "What?"

I chuckled softly as I said, "I asked if you were hungry. There's a diner nearby, we can get something to eat while we wait for your car to cool down. I'll buy."

"Well, that's tempting, but what's the catch?" Mollie asked, her eyebrows peaked with interest and I smiled softly, "It's for being an ass earlier today. You were right, I shouldn't have knocked you down like that. I never asked if you were okay, are you?"

She nodded, a smile twitched at the corner of her lips. I pulled her a little closer to me, looking deeper in her eyes. The connection was so strong, it was like time was standing still. Absentmindedly, I brushed a strand of hair off her face, bending low and hovered over her lips. I just wanted to brush my lips across hers, just once. I looked in her eyes for permission, something I never do. Usually I didn't have to ask, but this was different, I wanted her permission, I was begging for it. I almost closed the gap when her lips brushed ever so slightly against mine, sending shivers through my body, as she asked, "Um Callen? What are you doing?"

I stepped back, looking at her confused. What was wrong with me? Wincing, I closed my eyes and apologized, "I'm sorry, I don't know what that was all about."

"I have a boyfriend," Mollie blurted out and I detected a slight hint of regret in her voice. I wondered if she wanted to kiss me too. She stepped away, letting go of my hand, leaving me with a tingling sensation. I stared at her blankly, watching as she went to get her purse. She locked her doors and headed towards my jeep. She gave me an expectant look as she asked, "Are you coming?"

A slow smile spread across my face as I jogged over and opened her door for her. She smiled sweetly at me, climbing in and I shut the door behind her before going around to my side. A rush of excitement filled my veins as I got in and smiled genuinely at her. She rolled her eyes in amusement while smirking and looked out the window.

Mollie

I couldn't understand the feelings that had surfaced when his lips were hovering over mine. There was a strange connection between us, almost magnetic. It took all my resistance not to close the tiny gap between us, but Ben flashed in my mind and I had to pull away otherwise I would have been in trouble. I glanced over at him as he drove to the diner.

This was a Callen that was dangerous to me, one that I could find myself falling for if I didn't watch myself. When he's not being a cocky ass, he's actually a sweet guy. I wondered why he wasn't like this more often, maybe he was at one time and had his heart broken. It would explain a lot. I watched him, drum his fingers to the beat of the song on the radio and the setting sun highlighted his rugged features in his square jaw. He looked so handsome and relaxed. I was silently praying that this would be the Callen I lived with all summer, I think that I'd go crazy if it was the other one. He looked over at me as we pulled into the parking space and asked, "What?"

I shook my head, shrugging nonchalantly as I said, "Nothing." He eyed me curiously as we got out and headed inside. My breath caught in my throat as I felt like we had been transported back in time. The place was all decked out in 1950's decor. It was such a neat little place. I smiled softly at Callen as he reached for my hand, leading me to a booth. I couldn't ignore the fact how my hand fit perfectly in his. The humming through my skin from his simple touch was confusing. I had felt it earlier today when he shook my hand for the first time. I couldn't deny the strange connection that was between us. We sat down across from each other and a waitress stopped at our table. She smiled warmly at Callen and said, "Cal, it's so good to see you! How have you been? Still chasing the young ladies around?"

"Oh you know, Rosie, I'm only waiting for you to leave Stan back there." he said, scratching the back of his neck and I snorted back a laugh. Rosie looked at me and winked, "He's a sweet talker, you know. Watch out for him."

I laughed, nodding "Oh I am, trust me."

Rosie took our order and Callen folded his arms on the table, grinning sheepishly when I asked, "Come here often?"

"They have the best pie," he said, giving me a genuine smile. He unfolded his arms, stretching them across the table and taking my hands in his. I was beginning to like how natural this felt and that was scary. I pulled my hands

back, placing them in my lap. Sighing, I looked out the window, trying to ignore the feel of his legs resting against mine under the table.

"So, roommie," he said, bringing my attention back to him. I raised my eyebrows at him, watching him lean back against the booth as he asked, "Do we need to set some ground rules or something?"

"What do you mean? We only share the kitchen, living room, and laundry room. I think we can manage those three rooms without too much trouble, can't we? Or are you talking about 'if the house is rocking, don't come knocking'?" I asked, adding sarcasm and quotations to the last part, crossing my arms in front of me and leaned against them on the table. Callen leaned forward, narrowing his eyes with amusement, and stated, "I see my reputation has preceded me."

"Yep," I said, emphasizing the "p". His eyes gave me an unreadable expression before he looked away, sighing. It was almost as if he were wishing that wasn't true. There was a small part of me that wished he wasn't a womanizer, it was the same small part that wished I didn't have a boyfriend either so I could just kiss Callen and get it over with. I ignored that part of my mind.

"Look," I started, his eyes slowly met mine as I continued, "there's no walking around naked. If you're going to have girls over, then just let me know so I can either make it a point to be out or I can drown out you with my iPod. When we move in, we can designate cupboards where we can store our food and stuff. I don't mind cooking dinners, but I'm not going to do it all the time."

He nodded in agreement and then I added, "Oh, and I'm not your mother so if you make a mess, you clean it up, I'm not going to pick up after you nor do I expect you to clean up after me."

"Is that all?" he asked, with a smirk, and I bit my lip in thought. "If you are out partying and you're too drunk to drive, call me and I'll come get you or I can come with you. I'm not a big drinker, so I have no problem about being the designated driver." I paused, holding up a finger and said, "Just don't make it a habit, I'm not your taxi driver."

Callen chewed on his lip as he took all what I said in. My eyes flickered down to his soft lips for a brief second before I looked away, trying not to remember the way they felt when they brushed mine earlier. He smirked, giving me a cocky grin as he asked, "What, you don't want to see me naked?"

And he's back, I thought. I rolled my eyes, tossing a sugar packet at him as I snorted, "No thank you." Callen casually shrugged and I added, "And don't worry about me having tons of guys over either because I'm a one guy kind of girl and I don't cheat."

His eyebrows peaked with intrigue, but before he could say anything, Rosie set our food down in front of us. Closing my eyes, I inhaled the deliciousness of my bacon cheeseburger. It smelled like heaven to me. When I opened them, Callen was wearing an amused smile. I stuck my tongue out at him, causing him to chuckle softly.

"I bet all your other dates are not as in love with food as I am." I commented and he stiffened slightly before responding, "I actually don't go out on dates, we barely make it out of their dorm room. Or I take them to a movie so that we can sit in the back and makeout."

My eyebrows rose and he cringed as he asked, "That sounded really bad, didn't it? Wow, I am such a man whore."

I nodded, smiling proudly as I replied, "I'm glad that I could help you see your womanizing ways." It was his turn to stick his tongue out at me, causing me to laugh. He tried to stop the smile that was spreading across his face as he rolled his eyes.

We finished eating and left the diner. I had to promise Rosie that I would be back, which I fully intended on keeping. It was a great little place and the food was amazing. Callen placed a hand on the small of my back, sending little shivers up my back, as he guided me to his Jeep. He opened the door like a gentleman and before I climbed in, I kissed him gently on the cheek. My lips tingled from the touch of his skin.

His eyes narrowed with curiosity and I smiled shyly, "That's for doing all that you've done for me tonight, I really appreciate it."

He nodded slightly, a smile twitching at the corner of his lips. He shut my door behind me and scratched his head as he walked around to his side. The engine roared as we pulled out and he drove to a gas station to buy water for my car

Mollie

After filling the radiator, I started my car, but it didn't want to start. I cursed loudly, punching the steering wheel, causing the car to honk. I got out, slamming my door shut behind me and kicked the side, forgetting that I was wearing my gray pumps. I yelped in pain, hopping around on one foot before limping around trying to walk it off.

Callen took all of this in, leaned up against my car, with his arms crossed and an amused expression on his face. I shot him a glare as I braced myself against my car and took off my shoe to inspect my toe. It was red, but not bleeding, that was good.

Callen was kneeling in front of me at once, holding my foot in his palm. I grimaced as he ran my thumb over it to make sure that it wasn't broken. Even though a sharp pain caused me to wince, I had a feeling that it wasn't broken, I had just stubbed it. He held my foot gently as he looked up at me and said, "It doesn't feel like it's broken, but you're going to have a nasty bruise from where you stubbed it. I have a first aid kit in my Jeep, I'll see if it has any tape."

I sucked in a breath when he placed my foot gently down, my toe was throbbing. He jogged over to the back of his jeep, returning with the small white roll of tape. After taping my big toe next to the two toes next to it, he slipped my shoe on slowly. I smiled gratefully at him as I put my foot down. The toe still hurt, but I could at least stand without feeling like it was burning.

"Thanks," I said softly and he nodded, giving me a soft smile. He took out my keys and locked my car, then offered his hand out to me. I took it, letting him lead me to his jeep. He helped me in and said, "I have a friend who works on cars, I'll call him and have him tow it for you. He owes me a favor so it should be cheap, but he'll get it fixed."

"Thank you," I said and he smiled as he shut the door. I watched him whip out his cell phone and talk into it. I heard my cell phone ring in my purse and when I pulled it out, I saw that it was Ben. I answered it and said, "Hey."

"Are you okay? I'm so sorry that I didn't answer earlier, where are you?" he asked, sounding apologetic. I sighed, "I'm on Tree Hill Road, but I'm on my way back."

Callen gave me a curious look when he got in. I faced the window as I heard Ben say, "I feel like a horrible boyfriend, I should have been there for you. I've been trying to reach you for the past hour, but you didn't answer so I was worried. I almost called in a search party."

I smiled sweetly into the phone as I murmured, "See? You are not a horrible boyfriend. I had a little help from a friend, so I'm fine and I'll be back in a few minutes. Meet me at the party, ok?"

I noticed Callen watching me with a pained expression on his face. He looked away quickly when our eyes met and started the jeep. I sighed softly as I looked out the window and heard Ben say, "Okay, I'll wait out front. I love you."

"I love you too," I said softly as I hung up the phone. I noticed Callen's finger grip the steering wheel slightly before relaxing. He appeared to be having some kind of inner debate going on, so I sighed and looked out the window. I was having my own inner debate. Earlier today, I couldn't stand the guy, but tonight, I held his hand and almost kissed him. The kiss on the cheek was nothing, but a thank you.

I took in a deep breath, as I listed in my head why I could not start liking Callen. The three biggest reasons it just wasn't possible was, first of all, I was in love with Ben and was committed to him. Secondly, I was working for Callen's sister, how weird would that be? And last but not most certainly not least, Callen was a known player, despite his behavior tonight, that pretty much sunk any feelings that surfaced. I decided that once I stepped out of his jeep at the party, I would avoid him until it came time to move into the guest house and after that, I would try to avoid him at all costs.

We pulled around the corner to where we could hear the music pounding in the street from the frat house. He parked the jeep and glanced over at me. I reached out and touched his hand as I said, "Thank you for your help tonight."

He nodded, removing his hand from under mine and got out. I watched as he started walking towards the house and realized that nice and sweet Callen had faded away into jerk Callen. Rolling my eyes, I got out of his car and followed him silently. I stopped when I saw Ben look from Callen to me and a

hard expression crossed his face, which meant that I could only assume that Callen had shot him a cocky smirk as he approached.

"What were you doing with him?" Ben asked angrily, crossing his arms and glared at me. My eyes flashed to Callen, who shrugged with a huge smirk on his face as he disappeared into the house. The anger from earlier in the day returned as I shot a glare in the space he had just occupied. Ben cleared his throat, his eyebrows raised in expectation. I focused my anger back to Ben, after all he was the one who sent me to voicemail the five times that I called him.

"He was the one who stopped by to help me out tonight." I seethed back. I didn't like the assumption he was forming in his head, even though there was a glimmer of truth to it. Ben's face fell slightly as he wrapped his arms around me, I stiffened slightly in his grasp. Something was different, but I couldn't put a finger on it.

"I'm sorry, Molls," he said, kissing my forehead. "I just saw him get out of his car, flashing me a huge smirk and I jumped to conclusions."

I relaxed as I kissed him softly. I ignored the small voice that pointed out the missing sparks that I had with Callen. He deepened the kiss, picking me up slightly, holding me close to him. He pulled back and asked, "Do you want to stay here or go back to my place?"

I gave him a knowing look as I replied, "Now that's a silly question." He leaned in, giving me another kiss before releasing me. He took my hand and we walked away to his car, all thoughts of Callen were gone from my mind.